



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Shana Jones, Special Assistant  
Daryl Fields, Public Affairs Officer  
610 N.W. Loop 410  
San Antonio, Texas 78216  
(210) 384-7452

**ILLEGAL ALIEN SMUGGLERS SENTENCED**

**U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced today the sentencing of the following individuals for their roles in an illegal alien smuggling operation:

Alfredo Lopez, 28, a legal permanent resident from Mexico, and resident of Tornillo, Texas, was sentenced yesterday to 46 months in federal prison and 5 years of supervised release;

Dwayne Hector Ortiz, 40, of El Paso, Texas, was sentenced on December 15, 2004, to 41 months in federal prison;

Leticia Martinez, 34, of El Paso, Texas, was sentenced on November 16, 2004, to 32 months in federal prison;

Justin Wade Davenport, 31, of Farmington, Arkansas, was sentenced on October 19, 2004, to 12 months plus 1 day in federal prison;

Martial John Chamberland, 32, of Spring, Texas, was sentenced on October 21, 2004, to 33 months in federal prison;

Lawrence Elmer Pearce, Jr., 34, of Cantonment, Florida, was sentenced on October 21, 2004, to 87 in federal prison and

Gregory James Schottenloher, 43, originally from Tampa, Florida was sentenced on October 20, 2004, to 27 months in federal prison.

On or about April 4, 2004, a group of illegal aliens who congregated in Juarez Mexico, were guided into the United States to a ranch in Tornillo, Texas. There Alfredo Lopez transported at least 15 illegal aliens to El Paso, Texas, to a residence being rented by Dwayne Hector Ortiz and Leticia Martinez.

In the meantime, another individual, who remains a fugitive from justice, was in contact with Lawrence Elmer Pearce, Jr. who was a truck driver. This fugitive sought from Pearce a driver to take a group of aliens to Dallas, Texas, and then to Chicago, Illinois. Pearce had obtained from this fugitive approximately 600 pounds of marihuana and could not take the aliens. Pearce was accompanied at the time by Gregory James Schottenloher. Pearce was in contact via cell phone with Melinda S. O'Brien, another truck driver who was en route to El Paso from Yuma, Arizona. O'Brien agreed to pick up a group of 6 aliens in El Paso.

The fugitive provided Pearce a phone number to give to O'Brien, that being Ortiz's and Martinez's phone number. O'Brien contacted Ortiz and Martinez and they agreed to a rendezvous at a warehouse on the far east side of El Paso. On the night of April 4, 2004, Ortiz and Martinez brought a group of six aliens from their house to the warehouse where they then got into the sleeper of O'Brien's semi tractor. O'Brien left El Paso en route to Dallas.

In the early morning of April 5, 2004, O'Brien had a collision with a southbound tractor trailer. O'Brien's tractor became separated with its trailer. A northbound pick-up driven by Paul Wesley Wilkins, of Kermit, Texas, was unable to avoid the trailer and died in the collision. O'Brien, and three of the six aliens also died in the accident. An autopsy revealed that O'Brien had illegal drugs in her system.

On May 1, 2004, Pearce and Chamberland were apprehended at the Sierra Blanca U.S. Border Patrol Checkpoint on Interstate 10 and were caught with 577 pounds of marihuana. Defendants Lopez, Ortiz, Martinez, Pearce, and Schottenloher pled guilty to Conspiracy to transport illegal aliens for profit which resulted in death. Defendant Pearce also pled guilty to two counts of possession of over 100 kilograms of marihuana with the intent to distribute. Defendant Chamberland pled guilty to one count of possession of over 100 kilograms of marihuana with the intent to distribute. Defendant Davenport pled guilty to Misprision of a Felony in that he was aware of the conspiracy to transport aliens, but was not directly involved, but did not report the matter to authorities immediately.

This case was investigated by the Texas Department of Public Safety, Pecos, Texas, and by the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement from Fort Stockton, and Alpine. Assistant United States Attorney James J. Miller, Jr. prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.